

Minutes of the Town Meeting Coordinating Committee Meeting
March 4, 2008

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:07pm. Present were Otto Stein, Peggy Roberts, Judy Simpson, Phil Jackson and Carol Gray. Harry Brooks arrived shortly thereafter. Stephanie O'Keeffe was absent.

2. Minutes: The minutes from February 11 hadn't been approved last time so were this time. Judy moved, Otto seconded and the 2/11/08 minutes were approved unanimously with minor edits. Regarding the minutes from February 25, Harry moved, Judy seconded and the vote was unanimous to adopt the minutes with minor edits. (Note: Phil abstained from these votes since he hadn't been present at the meetings that the minutes were about.)

3. New information about terms

Judy checked the LWV's *Town Meeting Handbook* and found that Town Meeting members who have moved out of their precinct to another precinct can still serve until the next election, but their term expires if they move out of town. The minutes were amended to include this information.

4. Childcare: Harry reported that a memo went out on the Town Meeting list-serve that family care will now be available for Town Meeting members at a rate of \$20 per night (with receipts provided within 14 days of the expense).

5. Updates on informational CPAC and Capital Budget Forum:

Carol reported that John Musante is willing to speak about JCPC and she will ask Bonnie Isman from the Library to be the 2nd JCPC person. John can't do the forum on April 10 however so we decided to move the forum to April 9. Peter Jessop had confirmed for Thursday, April 10, but Carol will call to see if he is still available for April 9. The State CPAC person can't come after all but has given a PowerPoint presentation to Peter to do about projects around the state.

Harry called ACTV to check on the availability of that forum for April 9 and they said that will be fine. So the forum will be from 7:30pm-9pm at ACTV (doors will be open at 7pm).

Publicity for this event will need to be out by the week of March 24 or 31. Carol and Judy will make sure a publicity prepared. There will do a joint flyer (Warrant Review and bus tour on one side and the CPAC/JCPC forum on the other side).

Judy will handle getting the announcement about the forum out to the Bulletin by Monday morning, March 31.

6. Bus Tour:

Harry said he will ask Mary Wentworth again if she might be willing to organize the bus tour. He said if she isn't able to do the bus tour, then he (Harry) would be willing to do it. Carol said she could help if Harry were doing it. Peggy asked Jonathan Tucker if there was going to be zoning on the spring warrant. He said the Town Manager had asked that the Planning Board not put many zoning articles on the spring warrant because of the need to spend time on the budget. A news story reported that Vince O'Connor was submitting three petition articles about zoning, but two of them aren't based on specific locations to visit (e.g., dealing with steep slopes and adding recreational facilities for children in projects with affordable housing). Harry said ACTV is already booked for the bus tour.

7. Town Meeting and TMCC discs for Jones Library:

Judy asked for another volunteer to work with her on the project of getting discs about Town Meeting for the library. The discs would include the Warrant Review, the budget forum from April, 2007, the zoning forum and the bus tour from November, 2007. Judy will try to have these on discs at the library in time for this spring Town Meeting. Harry will call ACTV to ask them for copies of these discs. Another idea proposed was to take a few typical sessions from Town Meeting and put them on one disc to educate people about Town Meeting.

Regarding what to put on the shelf in the Jones Library, Judy received a book of the *Massachusetts General Laws* from Ellen Story to give to the library. Other materials would include: *The Amherst Town Government Act*, the *Town of Amherst Appointed Committee Handbook*, the *League of Woman Voters Town Meeting Handbook*, the *General Bylaws* and the *Zoning Bylaws*. Other documents on the Town website could be printed out such as the Planning Department's *Zoning Primer* and the League's *They Represent You* which lists Town Meeting members. Carol suggested there also be a complete set of all documents given to Town Meeting members put in a binder (e.g., the Warrant for Annual Town Meeting, all Planning Department memos, the Town Manager's proposed budget, and any other materials sent out to Town Meeting members). These Town Meeting materials would also be on the shelf. Judy has already talked to Bonnie Isman about this.

8. Discussion with Moderator:

Judy would like to discuss stream-lining the starting time of sessions, the issue of requiring written amendments. There were also requests that we talk to the Moderator about alternating recognition of Town Meeting members holding up red and green cards, about all speakers, including those speaking at the beginning of sessions before debate on articles, having time limits and about a suggestion to the TMCC that the podium be moved to the center of the stage so everyone can see the moderator better and he can see both sides well.

9. Warrant Review Report for the File:

Peggy said Otto did a very helpful report on how to do the Warrant Review for the TMCC file. She will distribute it at the next meeting. She urged that subcommittees and members keep records of their work for the committee file so that others do not have to “reinvent the wheel”.

10. Mentoring Write-Up:

Judy is planning to do a flyer asking for mentors and then plans to call all new Town Meeting members to tell them that mentors are available. She also suggested that mentors and mentorees meet to review Town Meeting videos to discuss procedure. Carol suggested there be an informal gathering with fruit and cheese for new members and their mentors so new members could get to know each other and mentors could be thanked publicly for being mentors. Judy suggested perhaps the Town Manager could come to such a gathering. The idea of setting up such an informal gathering was put on hold for now.

Judy requested for the next TMCC agenda that we discuss what will be put in the two Town Meeting packets.

11. TMCC on the Town Web Site:

Peggy reported that our TMCC webpage is up and that’s where she noticed that the bylaw establishing the TMCC states that we need to attach subcommittee reports to the minutes where appropriate. Stephanie posted a link under the Committee’s section of the Town Website to show that there is now a TMCC webpage. Peggy pointed out that one thing we don’t yet have is an email address. She will talk to Stephanie about the old address we had for TMCC. Carol had emailed Peggy a link to the Town of Lexington’s website that has a lot of good information about Town Meeting. Peggy said we have that information in the League’s *Town Meeting Handbook* so a link could be created for the website to that booklet.

12. Suggestions Subcommittee Recommendations:

It was decided that the discussion about additional suggestions would be continued after the Suggestions Subcommittee meets again. Peggy said she would do a memo for Town Meeting summarizing our decisions about suggestions received by TMCC.

13. Adjournment: Judy moved to adjourn, Harry seconded and the vote was unanimous to adjourn at 6:25pm.

Carol Gray, Secretary